

6/16/08 - Monday, June 16, 2008

CITY OF EAU CLAIRE

PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES

Meeting of June 16, 2008

City Hall, Council Chambers

7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Messrs. Buchanan, FitzGerald, Kaiser, Kayser, Larson, Pearson, Seymour, Waedt

Staff Present: Messrs. Amundson, Genskow, Noel, Tufte

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kaiser.

1. **REZONING (Z-1417-08) - Amendments to Sky Park Protective Covenants**

Darryl Tufte stated staff has received a request to amend the Sky Park Industrial Center Protective Covenants and General Development Plan to allow consideration by conditional use permit a fitness and conditioning facility with an outdoor challenge/fitness course. The subject site is located on Lot 2, Sky Park, southwest corner of Craig Road and W. Hamilton Avenue. The Sky Park Covenants were previously amended for a daycare facility as a conditional use permit in 2004. Concerns are how will this fitness business affect the Indoor Sports Center after moving out, and if their new facility will hold special events that are non-recreational. An approval of this request would allow the applicant to submit a site plan and conditional use permit later to the commission. The Sky Park Association voted 6 to 3 in favor of the request, with the City (majority land owner) not voting.

Applicant, Kurt Mattison, stated he needs more room for his business than what the Indoor Sports Center can currently provide, and based off market research, there are a large number of employees within a two-mile radius of the new site. He does not wish to hold special non-recreational events at the fitness center and explained there will be chiropractic service and massage therapy as part of the overall business concept.

No one spoke during the public hearing.

Mr. Kayser moved to recommend approval of amending the covenants. Mr. Seymour seconded and the motion carried.

2. **REZONING (Z-1418-08) - TR-1A to I-1P, Gateway Northwest Business Park**

Mr. Tufte presented the request by Gateway Industrial Park Corporation to rezone recently annexed land from Temporary R-1A to I-1P, and adopt the General Development Plan for Gateway Northwest Business Park, Phase II. The site is located on the east side of County Highway T, south of County Line Road and north of Fortune Drive.

Applicant, Jeff Halloin, 4004 Oakwood Hills Parkway, spoke in favor of the rezoning.

No one spoke during the public hearing.

Mr. FitzGerald moved to recommend approval. Mr. Pearson seconded and the motion carried.

3. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CZ-0820) - Crematorium, 3209 Rudolph Road**

Ned Noel presented Michael Hulke's request to allow a mortuary crematorium in a R-1 district. The proposal is to utilize Fuller-Speckien-Hulke Funeral Home's existing warehouse for a crematorium. The applicant provided manufacturing data on the retort, which demonstrated CO², particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds emissions would be minimal. The retort's burning technology also eliminates odors and reduces heat coming from the chimney stack.

Applicant, Michael Hulke, 3209 Rudolph Road, stated the cremation trend is rising and the crematorium would allow his business to be self-sufficient instead of outsourcing. He stated there are three other crematoriums in the community that have some residential properties nearby and he does not want to harm the residential neighborhood around his business so he will meet with them if necessary.

Steven Majstorovic, 1804 Lehman Street, stated he found research on crematoriums that they are usually located in industrial areas because of their heavy metal emissions. He was concerned about the heat coming from the stack and that it might affect nearby woods and animals.

Bette Wahl, 3030 Irene Drive, found credible studies on the internet which revealed crematoriums can emit mercury and other dioxins which may lead to cancer and still births.

Bill Walters, 3120 Clinton Court, stated the crematorium stack would be seen from his house when there is no tree foliage.

Mr. Kasyer moved to postpone the request until the July 14 meeting so the applicant can meet with the neighbors, and staff

can do more research on what other cities require. Mr. Waedt seconded and the motion carried.

4. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CZ-0821) - Daycare Center Expansion, 4605 London Road**

Mr. Noel stated the applicant's request is to enlarge the existing daycare center with an approximately 1,500 sq. ft. addition in a C-3P district. There is enough parking on-site for the additional employees and the development will now have an access off Cross Street.

The applicant, Bob Graziano, 4920 Shellamie Drive, spoke in favor of his project.

No one spoke during the public hearing.

Mr. FitzGerald moved to approve the conditional use permit with staff conditions. Mr. Kayser seconded and the motion carried.

5. **GENERAL SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PZ-0804) - Putnam Heights School Addition**

Mr. Noel addressed Eau Claire School District's request to approve a General Site Development Plan for an addition to Putnam Heights Elementary School at 633 W. MacArthur Avenue. The project consists of a new 1,120 sq. ft. kitchen and a 3,400 sq. ft. future>

Larry Summerfeldt, Eau Claire School District, spoke in favor of the project and stated they would eventually landscape around the facade when the>

Mr. Kayser moved to approve the conditional use permit with staff conditions. Mr. Waedt seconded and the motion carried.

6. **PEDESTRIAN MALL DESIGNATION - Thorp Drive**

Commissioner Seymour stepped out from the meeting.

Brian Amundson addressed abutting property owners' request to close Thorpe Drive to vehicular traffic and designate it a public pedestrian mall. The section of Thorp Drive in interest is from Summit Avenue to Gilbert Avenue. The Public Works Department collected data on the stretch of road and noted there are 570 vehicles a day and approximately 50 to 100 pedestrians a day. Also, there were five crashes last year at the intersection of Thorp and Summit. Closure of the drive would mean State Street would have about a 4% rise in traffic volume.

Shawn Rauckman, 127 Gilbert Avenue, presented photographs demonstrating the difficulties of vehicles and pedestrians trying to both use the 20-foot wide street.

Richard Myhers, 210 Gilbert Avenue, was concerned if the street was closed how it might affect emergency response time.

Curt Goodson, 1532 Drummond Street, uses Thorp Drive as a pedestrian way and supports the mall concept.

Catherine Sinkewicz, 1525 State Street, spoke on behalf of the Third Ward Neighborhood Steering Committee and that they voted in favor of the project unanimously (Commissioner Kasyer did not vote on the Steering Committee).

Bette Wahl, 3030 Irene Drive, suggested a walk-bridge along the riverbank so that both pedestrians and cars can use Thorp Drive.

Paula Sikorski, 617 Putnam Drive, suggested Thorp Drive could become a southbound one-way while still allowing for safer pedestrian travel.

Paula Stolp, 32 Newton Street, stated she and her husband use Thorp Drive to get to work and the street is a public road not a short cut.

David Irgens, 145 Marston Avenue, stated he is against a closure and felt the>

George Ripecky, 104 Wilcox Street, stated the road narrows even more when there are snow banks along the sides and thought a pedestrian way would cost less when the road needs to be upgraded.

Jan Lindblad, 120 Gilbert Avenue, stated the road should be a pedestrian way with only emergency access.

Larry Anderson, 147 Newton Street, stated cars and pedestrians can peacefully co-exist if people consider one another. He also suggested turning the road into a one-way.

Robert Sinz, 136 Oakwood Place, stated the biggest concern is safety, and closing the road to cars would protect pedestrians better.

Mr. Amundson answered commission questions about costs in upgrading the road as currently used or creating a pedestrian mall, timing of possible improvements, the best one-way option, and making the right-of-way wider to accommodate both interests.

Commissioners discussed one-way possibilities and promoting walkable spaces in the City, especially along the river.

Mr. Larson recommended to the City Council that Thorp Drive be closed to vehicular traffic and designated a pedestrian mall with emergency vehicle access. Mr. Buchanan seconded. The motion carried with six ayes, Mr. Waedt voting nay, and Mr. Seymour not voting.

7. **ACQUISITION - 742 N. Barstow Street**

Commissioner Seymour returned to the meeting.

Mr. Amundson presented the report for the City to acquire a dilapidated house for demolition to create an alley. The property is located at the north end of a narrow dead-end street and the City has encountered several ongoing issues in this block with dead-end streets and alleys making access difficult for garbage trucks and snowplowing. Acquisition of this property would allow an alley "loop-access" reducing concerns. Extra land on either side of the new alley could be sold to the abutting property owners.

Mary Kilboten, 744 N. Barstow Street, had concerns over additional stormwater, drainage, erosion of the hillside, and its retaining walls due to construction impacts of this proposal.

Mr. Amundson stated these issues could be addressed if and when the new alley is actually constructed.

Mr. FitzGerald motioned to recommend to the City Council approval of the land acquisition. Mr. Kasyer seconded and the motion carried.

8. **SITE PLAN (SP-0821) - 4-plex, 224 9th Avenue**

Mr. Tufte presented the request to approve a site plan for a 4-plex at 224 9th Avenue. The site has Residential Mixed (RM) zoning and the Comprehensive Land Use Plan designated this parcel as appropriate for medium to higher density. The building will have 15 bedrooms. Parking has been provided with 15 stalls to the rear of the proposed building. No comments from the Historic Randall Park Neighborhood Steering Committee were received.

The applicant, John Schepke of 440 Broadway Street, stated he owns the property to the south, not north, and would be willing to construct a fence along the north property line. He would also plant a variety of trees and move snow off-site when needed.

Mr. FitzGerald motioned to approve the site plan with staff conditions, adding: plant a variety of trees and construct a screening fence along the north property line unless waived in a letter by the abutting owner. Mr. Buchanan seconded and the motion carried.

9. **DISCUSSION/DIRECTION**

A. Landscape Standards - Parking Lots

- Mr. Tufte presented possible options to amend the City's Landscape Manual to encourage better diversity of tree species and shading/softening parking lots.
- Commissioners viewed site plans from various projects, which demonstrated good site and parking lot landscaping. Strengths were pointed out. Amending the manual was favored instead of creating a new landscape ordinance.
- Staff will research what other cities require and bring back a draft.

B. Improved Surfaces

This item was postponed because Mr. Duax was not present.

C. Code Compliance Items

Mr. FitzGerald asked Public Works staff to look into the possibility of adding a connecting sidewalk by the pump station along Thorp Drive from Marston Avenue to Gilbert Avenue.

D. Future Agenda Items

Mr. Buchanan asked staff if the packet could have page numbers and item cover sheets.

Mr. Kaiser requested the commissioners receive City Council minutes.

10. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of June 2, 2008, were approved.